

**"THE DREAMKEEPER
SPEAKS: THE WORLD OF
LANGSTON HUGHES"**



with John Patterson



THE DREAM KEEPER SPEAKS: THE WORLD OF LANGSTON HUGHES
directed by Ernest Parham

Featuring

JOHN S. PATTERSON

Part I

THE DREAM KEEPER SPEAKS OF HARLEM AND THE PEOPLE IN IT

Intermission

Part II

THE DREAM KEEPER SPEAKS OF HARLEM AND THE WORLD AROUND IT

JOHN S. PATTERSON (The Dream Keeper) "Dream Keeper" is a project which Mr. Patterson has developed over the past four years and is currently presenting in the Orleans Parish Junior High Schools where he is serving as Artist In Residence for the Arts Education Program. Last season saw the show presented in numerous colleges and this season "...Dream Keeper" will be seen at Tougaloo College and Mary Holmes College in Mississippi, South Carolina State, the University of Rochester, Onondaga Community College (Syracuse), Southeastern Massachusetts University, Ramapo Junior College (New Jersey), as well as at New York City's American Museum of Natural History. Patterson was also presented at Berkeley Stage Company in California for a three week run.

Patterson received his M.F.A. in Directing from Ohio University and received a Certificate in Voice Training from the Lessac Training Program at SUNY - Binghamton. He has worked in both university and regional theatre, most recently directing "Lift Every Voice" for Indiana Rep. For four years he was a full-time adjunct faculty member in Theatre at Livingston College of Rutgers University, directing and teaching acting. He is Theatre Editor for the Villager.

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ERNEST PARHAM (Director) is also a singer, dancer and choreographer. Parham made his choreographic debut on a program with Alvin Ailey at the 92nd Street Y. In Australia, where he headed his own company, "The Ernest Parham Dance Company", he choreographed "Carousel", "The Fantasticks", "Sound of Music", and "Most Happy Fella". Most recently he choreographed "Toby Time" Off-off Broadway. As a singer, he has made numerous appearances, among them the Tonight Show, The Mike Douglas Show and has appeared at both the Persian Room at the Plaza and the International Hotel in Las Vegas. He is currently performing his own solo act in and around New York and on cruise ships in the Caribbean.

JAMES MERCER LANGSTON HUGHES (1902-1967) was born on February 7, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri and his parents separated shortly thereafter. He grew up in the mid-west, living what he described as "...a lonely, passed-around childhood". He graduated from Central High School in Cleveland, Ohio where he published poems in the style of Carl Sandburg. One of the enduring Hughes favorites -- "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" -- was written at that time and published in the Crisis, official organ of the NAACP. After a stormy visit with his father who lived in Mexico he returned to the United States and entered Columbia University for the education his father had agreed to finance. He dropped out of Columbia in June of 1922 and lived in Harlem, working at odd jobs and in 1923, he shipped out on the merchant freighter S.S. Malone. He subsequently traveled through Europe and lived in Paris for a time.

Back home he worked briefly in a laundry for \$12 a week, won poetry prizes from the Crisis and Opportunity and began writing poems in the jazz and blues idioms. While working as a busboy at Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., he placed three poems at poet Vachel Lindsay's dining table. That night, Lindsay announced he had discovered a "negro busboy poet" and read Hughes's poems to his audience. Next day, there was nationwide publicity for Hughes.

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In 1926 he entered Lincoln University and published his first book of poems, "The Weary Blues". In 1931 he received The Hammond Gold Award for Literature for "Not Without Laughter" and subsequently embarked on a poetry reading tour of the South--a method of supporting himself he was to use for the rest of his life. Perhaps his most widespread renown grew from his column in The Chicago Defender, begun in 1942, "Tales of Semple", wry commentaries on American life as seen through the eyes of a witty Harlemitte, Jesse B. Semple. In 1947 he moved into the house on East 127th Street in Harlem which was to remain his home for the rest of his life.

In the last twenty years of his life, honors flowed in: election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, numerous honorary doctorates, awards and continuous publication right up to his death in 1967. Hughes died in New York's Polyclinic Hospital from complications following surgery on May 22, 1967.

DON'T FORGET --- JYMIE MERRITT AND FORERUNNER is premiering a new, creative jazz concept on Friday, May 2, 1986 at 8 PM right here, at JKC. Jymie Merritt is something of a jazz legend already --- check with Art Blakey! Tickets are \$5 for adults, \$3 for MCCC Students & seniors.

TONIGHT and tomorrow night at 8 PM in the Kelsey Theatre - West Windsor Campus of MCCC: "THE WOOLGATHERER" by award winning Trenton playwright, William Mastrosimone. "Will she keep him or add his cardigan to her collection?" Tickets are available at the door: Adults \$6, Seniors and MCCC Students \$3. Call: (609)586-4695 - 24 Hour Credit Card reservation.

Program presented by: ACE Touring Program

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